

Early in August, 1917, Mr. John Hair, gamekeeper of Mr. R. T. Crane at Ipswich, missed six of a four days old brood of Bob-whites. He had seen a Kingfisher nearby and later the same day saw it perched on the gable end of the little house where the Bob-whites had been hatched, and from there pounce on the young birds as they ran in and out. He shot the Kingfisher, and, on opening the bird, a female, found the legs and feathers of the young Bob-whites in its crop.


Most authors state that the Kingfisher is exclusively a fish eater. Knight, 'Birds of Maine', 1908, p. 270, says Kingfishers feed on "grasshoppers, also crickets, butterflies and moths, which latter two I have seen the birds take while on the wing, chasing them until they are caught." Weed and Dearborn, 'Birds in their Relations to Man,' 1903, p. 192, say: "The food consists principally of fish, but occasionally mice, frogs or grasshoppers are captured." I have been unable to find in literature any record of the capture of birds by Kingfishers.

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## NOTES ON NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS.

### V.

BY HARRY C. OBERHOLSER.

THE notes below presented<sup>1</sup> concern the status of four North American birds. These are, respectively, members of the families *Buteonidæ*, *Regulidæ*, and *Fringillidæ*. 

#### *Astur atricapillus* (Wilson).

Dr. Ernst Hartert has recently<sup>2</sup> included the North American Goshawk, *Accipiter atricapillus* Wilson, among the subspecies of the European Goshawk, *Astur palumbarius* (Linnæus), or, as he calls it, *Accipiter gentilis* (Linnæus). Examination of a series of

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<sup>1</sup> For previous papers in this series, cf. 'The Auk,' XXXIV, April, 1917, pp. 191-196; XXXIV, July, 1917, pp. 321-329; XXXIV, October, 1917, pp. 465-470; and XXXV, January, 1918, pp. 62-65.

<sup>2</sup> Vögel paläarkt. Fauna, Heft IX (Band II, Heft 3), October, 1914, p. 1146.

both birds shows that Dr. Hartert is probably correct in his view of the status of the American bird. The latter differs from *Astur gentilis* in its more mottled or irregularly barred lower parts; but individual variation in each of the two races bridges this difference. The American Goshawk is certainly a very distinct form, but is best regarded as a subspecies of the European bird. The two American subspecies should therefore be called *Astur gentilis atricapillus* (Wilson); and *Astur gentilis striatulus* Ridgway.

### **Regulus satrapa** Lichtenstein.

Mr. C. E. Hellmayr some time ago<sup>1</sup> considered the American Golden-crowned Kinglet a subspecies of the European Golden-crested Wren (*Regulus regulus*). Recent comparison of a series of specimens of both shows that this is undoubtedly the relationship of the two birds, for, although their ranges are entirely separate, being cut off by the Atlantic Ocean, they are fully connected by intermediate individuals, and, therefore, from a modern standpoint are, of course, subspecies. As there is no question regarding the subspecific relationship of the Western Golden-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus satrapa olivaceus* Baird), our two Golden-crowned Kinglets must now stand as *Regulus regulus satrapa* Lichtenstein, and *Regulus regulus olivaceus* Baird.

### **Passerella iliaca altivagans** Riley.

The Fox Sparrow described by Mr. J. H. Riley as *Passerella iliaca altivagans*,<sup>2</sup> from the Moose Pass Branch of the Smoky River, Alberta, has been discredited by most subsequent authors. Further study of this bird, however, shows that it is a good form, most closely allied to *Passerella iliaca*, but differing in its more rufous upper parts, including the outer webs of the secondaries and tertiaries and of the tail; and in the more rufescent spots on the lower surface. From other races of *Passerella iliaca* it is so different as

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<sup>1</sup> Wytzman's *Genera Avium*, XVII, 1911, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Proc. Biol. Soc. Wash.*, XXIV, November 28, 1911, p. 234.

scarcely to need comparison. It therefore should be restored to standing among reputable subspecies. It breeds from at least central Alberta to northern British Columbia, and occurs in migration or winter south to Montana, Oregon, and California.

**Melospiza melodia inexpectata** Riley.

The Song Sparrow described by Mr. J. H. Riley<sup>1</sup> as *Melospiza melodia inexpectata*, from near Moose Lake, British Columbia, has been by most authors considered invalid. A reëxamination of the type material, together with a considerable number of additional specimens which have accumulated since the publication of the original description, bears out the characters assigned, and shows, moreover, that it is a good race with a well-defined geographic distribution. It is most nearly allied to *Melospiza melodia rufina*, but is decidedly smaller, particularly in so far as the bill and wing are concerned; and is, in fact, a smaller, darker, somewhat heavily streaked edition of that bird. It can by no means be considered merely an intermediate between *Melospiza melodia merrilli* and *Melospiza melodia rufina*. It occupies an extensive area, ranging, as it does, from central Alberta to northern British Columbia.

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<sup>1</sup> Proc. Biol. Soc. Wash., XXIV, November 28, 1911, p. 234.